

WILEY



One Fairy Story Too Many: The Brothers Grimm and Their Tales by John M. Ellis; Fairy Tales and the Art of Subversion: The Classical Genre for Children and the Process of Civilization by Jack Zipes; The Trials and Tribulations of Little Red Riding Hood: Versions of the Tale in Sociocultural Context by Jack Zipes; Die Geschichte vom Rotkäppchen: Ursprünge, Analysen, Parodien eines Märchens by Hans Ritz

Review by: Ruth B. Bottigheimer

The German Quarterly, Vol. 58, No. 1 (Winter, 1985), pp. 144-147

Published by: [Wiley](#) on behalf of the [American Association of Teachers of German](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/406074>

Accessed: 17/01/2015 18:39

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at <http://www.jstor.org/page/info/about/policies/terms.jsp>

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.



Wiley and American Association of Teachers of German are collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *The German Quarterly*.

<http://www.jstor.org>

of her analysis, Hoffmeister's tools become apparent, naming (sociolinguistics, speech act theory) and name-dropping (Weinrich, Habermas) are no substitute for a discussion of means and ends.

The volume, a revised dissertation, is, as usual with Camden House publications, attractively and impeccably printed. The text itself could have used an editor's hand to clean up, among other things, the footnotes (fn. 7, p. 153, fn. 65 and 66, p. 164), annoying repetitions of the exact same references (Clayton Hamilton's dusty distinctions on p. 30, 60, 77, 78; Brecht's *Grundgestus*, p. 78 and 112; Otto Ludwig's *Zustandsbild*, p. 14 and 115), and stylistic weaknesses (eg. overuse of the modifier "somewhat").

University of Texas, San Antonio

MARC SILBERMAN

V. CULTURAL AND SOCIAL HISTORY

ELLIS, JOHN M. *One Fairy Story Too Many: The Brothers Grimm and Their Tales*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983.

ZIPES, JACK. *Fairy Tales and the Art of Subversion: The Classical Genre for Children and the Process of Civilization*. New York: Wildman Press, 1983.

ZIPES, JACK. *The Trials and Tribulations of Little Red Riding Hood: Versions of the Tale in Sociocultural Context*. South Hadley, Mass.: Bergin and Garvey Publishers, 1983. (*Rotkäppchens Lust und Leid: Biographie eines europäischen Märchens*. Köln: Diederichs Verlag, 1982.)

RITZ, HANS. *Die Geschichte vom Rotkäppchen: Ursprünge, Analysen, Parodien eines Märchens*. Göttingen: Muri Verlag, 1983.

All is not peaceful in the fairy tale kingdom. Hans Ritz has issued a single page broadside attacking Jack Zipes' *Rotkäppchen* book, while Zipes has written a six page riposte to John Ellis' *One Fairy Story Too Many*, each of which readers of this review essay may have already seen. It's instructive, at the outset, to disentangle the threads of polemic from the thesis each book sets forth.

Using the dark language of conspiracy, Ellis asserts repeatedly that both Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm knew that they were in the process of manufacturing a putatively pure Germanic collection, which was rotten to its Huguenot core; the proof, he claims, lies in their "systematic" destruction of their notes, which demonstrates to Ellis' satisfaction that they wished to destroy the evidence of their "fraud": "... it will become clear that they consciously and deliberately misrepresented what they had done, and deceived their public" (p. 6). Furthermore, Ellis asserts, subsequent generations of scholars have refused to acknowledge the copious evidence of the Grimms' perfidy.

Zipes, also taking a revisionist tack—in *The Trials and Tribulations* . . . —argues that fairy tales have a social history, and that investigation of a single tale reveals how writers have made the fairy tale into a discourse intended to socialize children. This thesis elaborates the ideas which Zipes set out in *Fairy Tales and the Art of Subversion*

and somewhat less rigorously in *Breaking the Magic Spell: Radical Theories of Folk and Fairy Tales* (London: Heinemann, 1979).

Ritz takes a descriptive rather than an analytic position, saying that Rotkäppchen “ist der Spiegel an der Wand, in der sich jede Epoche neu gesehen hat” (p. 9).

The Zipes and Ritz volumes on Red Riding Hood fall into the venerable tradition established by Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm themselves of collecting variants. Whereas, however, the Grimms were interested in collating those variants deriving from German sources to produce a final version which retained the principal motifs (motifs are the building blocks of tales, such as spinning straw to gold or guessing an outlandish name), contemporary research focuses more on function and motivation. Hence the collecting of variants continues but with a new purpose: to demonstrate how tales shift over time and to indicate what conclusions may be drawn from these shifts. Misunderstanding the 19th-century passion for categorizing and ordering which dominated fairy tale research for the first hundred or so years of its existence, Ellis faults the Grimms’ methods and labels them fraudulent.

In pursuing this line of thought, Ellis re-assembles the history of scholarship germane to the origins of Grimms’ Tales in order to support his case that German scholars have systematically ignored evidence of the collection’s foreign, or at least non-German origins. It is indisputable that the popular imagination still adheres to the nationalistic orthodoxy that the *Kinder- und Hausmärchen* represent something quintessentially German, whose corollary, naturally, is that they derive from German sources, as the Grimms stated in the preface to the first edition. Grimm scholars, on the other hand, have recognized the foreign origins of much of the material for so long a time that it is no longer an interesting question, and hence is not discussed. That there should be a disparity between the scholarly and the broad public position on the issue should not surprise anyone; in another thirty years every schoolchild will begin to be aware of the results of contemporary scholars’ work. It would have been more interesting to undertake a history of Grimm, or better still, fairy and folktale scholarship to show the astonishing variety of approaches and concerns over the years, as Alan Dundes did in *Cinderella: A Folklore Casebook* (New York: Garland Press, 1982).

In terms of their lasting contribution to knowledge of the subject, the results are uneven. Ellis’ book is graced by an excellent bibliography, as is Zipes’ *Fairy Tales and the Art of Subversion* and *The Trials and Tribulations*

Ellis has admirable discussions of the content shift between the 1810 Ölenberg MS and the 1812 first edition of the *Kinder- und Hausmärchen* (p. 53 f.), as well as of the shifts in “Hänsel and Gretel,” shifts which exculpate the father and incriminate the mother, thus reducing parent-child conflict by creating a palpably evil Prime Mover whom others are powerless to resist. This kind of scholarship and these kinds of results are consistent with the new directions in Grimms’ *KHM* scholarship. In the penultimate chapter he introduces probably the most important idea of the book, namely the effect of nationalism on German fairy and folktale research, crediting inflamed national sentiments with reducing German scholars’ ability to recognize and accept evidence which would invalidate the notion of pure Germanic origins of the tales.

Against these contributions to Grimm scholarship are ranged some quite considerable flaws. The “original MS” (viii), by which Ellis must mean the Ölenberg MS of 1810, was not an “Original” in that in the one case in which an earlier tale version can be produced (“Marienkind”) substantial changes had already been made. There is thus no reason to conclude that the 1810 MS represents informants’ own words, since it was

copied from the Grimms' notes to send to Arnim and Brentano. Like most scholars Ellis focuses only on the Large Editions and then only a few, ignoring entirely the Small Editions, which themselves have much to reveal with reference to how Wilhelm Grimm reshaped the tales over a fifty-year period.

Ellis' discussion of the shifting content of the tales would be enriched by a deeper knowledge of the editorial history of the *KHM*. It is important to remember that both Grimms received multiple versions of the many tales; the form the tale evinced in either 1810 MS or 1812-15 first edition acted often as a lodestone, attracting to it further variants, which when collated with the earlier version incorporated new, or different, elements. Nor does Ellis address the naturally occurring differences between oral and written narrative. However, the basic flaw in Ellis' line of argument grows out of his own ignoring the effects and results of the long editorial and publication history of the *KHM* in two important respects. The first has to do with the accretion of tale variants in the first few decades of its published existence. The second has to do with the "German-ness" of one of the Grimms' primary informants, Frau Viehmann, whose portrait by Emil Ludwig Grimm introduced vol. II in many Large Editions of the *KHM*. That her background was Huguenot is not in dispute and has not been for many years. However, several layers of conjecture are all that Ellis can adduce to discredit her credentials as a genuine Hessian tale teller. Because her father seems to have been a prosperous innkeeper, he assumes that Frau Viehmann was herself solidly middle class at the end of her life. She may have been. But she needn't have been. Her portrait with its wrinkled brown, gnarled hands and coarse dress suggests a life of toil. Furthermore, Ellis presupposes a social separation from folk narrative based on socio-economic stratification, forgetting the extent to which women mediated the interpenetration of social classes in a servant-filled household. Either way, Frau Viehmann's credentials remain intact: poor she knew the folk as neighbors; well-off they mingled in the kitchen and workroom.

Ellis' work emphasizes the apparent need for the people of the Germanies in the 19th and 20th centuries to feel that they, too, had a unifying national folkloric corpus. One hopes that Ellis will continue his work in this direction, perhaps with a publication history of the *KHM*.

Zipes' *Subversion* represents an enlargement and elaboration of some of the ideas advanced in *Breaking the Magic Spell*, where he developed the concept of "instrumentalization," that is, the exploitation of fairy tales by social and economic forces within society. There he addressed principally the German folk and fairy tale corpus plus Tolkien and also in a final chapter took Bruno Bettelheim to task for his moralistic interpretations. In *Subversion* his horizons include not only English and German, but also French, Danish, and American folk and fairy tales (Frank Baum, George MacDonald, Oscar Wilde). Zipes possesses a formidable knowledge of the genre, which he focuses through a Marxist and/or feminist lens. His insistent reminders of the numerous ways in which fairy tale material has been reshaped are a welcome antidote to naive assertions from the Jungian, Freudian, and Christian camps that fairy tales represent ageless and universal archetypes. However, in his frame of reference, tales reshaped by socialist and feminist writers appear positively as "re-utilized" (*Subversion*) whereas those transformed by the powers that be are negatively denoted as "instrumentalized" (*Breaking . . .*). The same acceptance of incompatible canons appears in his uncritical utilization as convenient of Freud's oral-anal-erotic paradigm or Piaget's developmental stages to validate his argument(s).

Zipes has performed the greatest of services to American fairy tale research by introducing the iconoclastic research methods which flowered in Germany in the 1970's to American fairy tale scholarship, which had settled into the arms of psychologists (Erich Fromm: *The Forgotten Language* and Bruno Bettelheim: *The Uses of Enchantment*) who mined the material—sometimes mistakenly—for the corroborating benefits it offered them and their research.

As previously indicated, the collection of variants enjoys a long and honorable history. Zipes' *Trials and Tribulations . . .* and Ritz' *Geschichte vom Rotkäppchen* will follow Röhrich's *Zwölfmal Rotkäppchen* (1967) and the Red Riding Hood section (pp. 79-99) of Wolfgang Mieder's *Grimms Märchen Modern* (Reclam 1979). There is considerable overlap in the contents of Zipes' and Ritz' volumes: Perrault, Grimm Joachim Ringelnatz, James Thurber, and Tomi Ungerer. In general Zipes' book includes French, English, and American versions, while Ritz principally offers German ones. In terms of organization Zipes' interpretive essay precedes the texts, while Ritz intersperses his interpretive comments among the variants and excerpts. Zipes analyzes the nature of shifts; Ritz, himself a professional storyteller, exuberantly recounts the glorious variety of Red Riding Hood tales. In an addendum Ritz has included wonderfully comic versions, for instance "Rotkäppchen auf Amtsdeutsch."

As a reviewer one is forced to consider whether the questions set are themselves valid and worth pursuing. Ellis has ignored some research which would eclipse his inquiry (Zipes and Rölleke, for example). Furthermore the early comparative studies which he feels would have revealed just how much "tampering" went on are more limited than he realizes. Concerned primarily with questions of style, early 20th century scholars noted, for example, the shift from indirect to direct speech, or whether the vocabulary was moving in a folk or bourgeois direction, or even how the paragraphing changed from one edition to another! Serious Grimm scholars all acknowledge Wilhelm's particular editorial changes in content, but are just beginning to investigate the significance of these changes.

Ellis wants to serve up humble pie and he requires outrage where scholarly perspective—lightened perhaps by bemusement at the limitations suffered by the most perspicacious of scholars—would remind most of us that the way in which we examine material is largely determined by the basic premises and preconceptions of the age we live in.

These four volumes hint at the state of fairy tale research in the 1980's. Released from the Coventry of "minor genre" they are being investigated seriously in their sociocultural and historical contexts because of their peculiar, perhaps unique qualities. Seen as capturing and encapsulating social values, fairy tales are valued by many social historians as a retrievable component in the often undocumented central formative experiences of childhood, familiarity with which cuts across all social and educational boundaries. As such fairy tales are enjoying a hard-earned and newly won respectability.

Princeton University

RUTH B. BOTTIGHEIMER

Weimar Germany. Writers and Politics. Ed. Alan F. Bance. Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press, 1982. viii + 183 pp. \$16.00 paperback.

The Weimar period, so claims the editors, is so exciting, even sensational, that current students of the period find it easily accessible. One reason is that it raised